

FAQ for Water Sampling and Testing Process for Colorado Residents

With the importance of water sampling results at a premium, San Juan Basin Health, La Plata County, City of Durango, and EPA would like to help the community understand how the process works.

- Region 8 EPA Sampling crews, in conjunction with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Water Quality Division, and Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) have been and will be sampling locations from above Silverton, near the Gold King Mine, all the way to the Colorado/New Mexico border.
- Crews will also sample in New Mexico, Utah and Arizona.
- Once at the location, samples take a minimum of 30 minutes to collect. Additionally, some collection sites are difficult to access further adding to collection time frames.
- EPA has procured the services of a certified drinking water laboratory in Savannah, as well as the Denver area. Samples will be shipped overnight to the lab.
- CDPHE sends their samples to the State lab along with utilizing local resources and processing some samples through Green Analytical; a small Durango based lab
- The turnaround time for laboratories to process samples is different depending on the number of personnel and instruments available. Small labs may only be able to guarantee a 48-hour turnaround time.
- The processing of samples requires numerous regulatory steps with different protocols and procedures due to analysis requirements.
- After the laboratory instrument runs the test, the sample results are reviewed.
- A report is then prepared and released to EPA for review and interpretation, in order to put the results into context. Once the data report is completed, it is posted to the EPA website at ~~www.epaossc.org/GoldKingMine~~. We are launching a new website at epa.gov – when do you need this?
- CDPHE results will be made available.